V. Single rail and short welded three rail panels are being converted into long welded rails. This process removes fish plated joints from the track for greater reliability.

VI. The specifications of rail steel have been upgraded and are in conformity with the International Union of Railways (UIC) specifications. ^

VII. Ultrasonic Flaw Detectors are used to detect hidden flaws in the rail.

VIII. Mechanised maintenance of track is being introduced progressively, for better and improved maintenance.

IX. The track structure is being upgraded on a planned basis.

X. To keep the track-in"good condition, track renewals are carried out whenever it.becomes due for renewal subject to availability of funds.

Rail link rakes for Karnataka

4452. DR. VIJAY MALLYA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways was approached by Government of Karnataka to provide sufficient railway rakes for movement (export) of 2 lakhs tonnes of Maize to Bangladesh from Ranibennur and Haveri ofKamataka; and

(b) by when the Railway rakes will be provided to that State ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Movement to Bangladesh is regulated due to limited acceptance of I ains by Bangladesh Railways. Government of Karnataka has also been apprised of the same. As on date, there is only one demand in Karnataka for loading Maize to Bangladesh which will be cleared in its turn.

Stoppage of Rajdhani Express at Raichur

4453. DR. VIJ AY MALLYA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a move to cancel the present stop over of Rajdhani Express at Raichur;

(b) whether Railways are aware that such a proposal, if any, would cause a lot of inconvenience to the commuters of Raichur; and

(c) whether railways would drop the proposal in the interest of commuters from Raichur ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI B AND ARU D ATTATRAYA): (a) to (c) There is no proposal to cancel the stoppage of Rajdhani Express train at Raichur, at present.

Jammu-Udhampur Rail link

4454. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Jammu-Udhampur Rail link could not be completed so far, if so; the reasons therefor;

(b) what is the status of the projects for laying of railway line between Udhampur and Qazigund and Udhampur-Baramula; and

(c) what is the mode of funding for these projects, section-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) Yes, Sir. The project has been progressed as per the availability of resources. Besides, the construction involved large number of tunnels and viaducts/bridges in difficult hilly terrain. The project is now in the advanced stage of completion and is targetted during 2003-04.

(b) The work of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramula has been taken up in phases. Earthwork, bridge work and tunnelling is in various stages of progress on Udhampur-Katra section. On Qazigund-Baramula section, land acquisition, earthwork and bridge work is in progress. The work on Katra-Qazigund section has been entrusted to IRCON and KRCL and is being taken up.

(c) The funding of Jammu-Udhampur section is being done through budgetary support of the Railways. Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramula has been declared as 'National Project' and funds are Being provided by Ministry of Finance as an additionality to the normal budgetary support for Railways.

Modernisation of stations in Gujarat

†4455. DR. A. K. PATEL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the conditions of railway stations becoming worse due to over crowding at number of large stations of Gujarat;

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†Original notice of the question was reveived in Hindi.